

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-19

NEW YORK TIMES
23 November 1983
*Plan for Censorship
Of Federal Officials
For Life Is Held Off*

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22 — President Reagan today signed a measure that blocked until April 15 any effort by the Administration to install a system of lifelong censorship for more than 100,000 officials handling highly sensitive information.

The measure was attached to a bill authorizing programs for the State Department, the United States Information Agency and related agencies.

Mr. Reagan's action marked the second time recently that he has been compelled to sign legislation curbing his Administration's effort to restrict the unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information.

In September, Mr. Reagan signed a bill barring until April 15 the expanded use of polygraph, or lie-detector, examinations in investigations of unauthorized disclosures of information to the press and others.

'Review' Agreements Sought

Both the lifelong censorship and polygraph steps were contained in a Presidential directive last March 11 aimed at protecting national security secrets. The directive brought protests in the news media, from many former Government officials and in Congress.

Under the lifelong censorship directive, the Administration has begun distributing requests to officials of the Defense, State, Justice and other departments to sign agreements consenting to "prepublication review" by Government censors of their writing for the rest of their lives.

Administration officials said that some of the more than 100,000 employees with access to sensitive information might have already signed the agreements.

But in the closing day of its session last week, Congress attached to the State Department authorization bill the measure temporarily barring the practice. In signing the bill today, Mr. Reagan made no comment about the censorship issue.

The State Department bill authorizes various agencies to plan on spending up to \$3.2 billion in the current fiscal year and \$3.5 billion in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 1984.

It also creates a new program, a National Endowment for Democracy, that would provide grants to private organizations trying to foster democracy abroad. Another clause says that the United States would suspend its membership in the United Nations if that body ever expelled Israel.